

F189

C13M3





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F189
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In the long ago past, there mysteriously came
An odd looking creature, whom none knew his name ;
He fished and he hunted, but troubled no one,
Was contented and happy with dogs and his gun.

After spending awhile in this beautiful spot,
He disappeared suddenly—none knew his lot.
His cabin did crumble to dust and decay,
But his fame will exist for many a day.

The Run and the Bridge will ever remain
To remind us of " John of the Cabin "—the same ;
While the genius and skill of a great engineer
In ages to come will ever appear.

—J. H. WILSON MARRIOTT.



TEN MILES northwest from the Capitol and seven miles from Georgetown, upon the Conduit Road—the most beautiful driveway out of Washington—is one of the most imposing and wonderful structures which engineering skill could devise, CABIN JOHN BRIDGE, and yet it would appear that this monument to the genius of man is not as well known nor appreciated by our people and the hosts of visitors and sightseers who come to the Capital City as it should be, for many thousands come to Washington, make a round of the public buildings, a trip to Arlington, perhaps, and go away unmindful of the fact that Cabin John Bridge is one of the architectural wonders of the world.

Aside from the bridge itself, the creek that it crosses, the ravines and hills, the forests, the deep, shadowy glens and tangled wildwoods are in themselves deep objects of interest and beauty.

To reach there a drive or a spin awheel over the Conduit Road—as smooth and hard as a floor—is perhaps most enjoyable, but to the masses of people the electric car presents the easiest and most attractive means of reaching there. Take any Georgetown west-bound car on F Street, passing through part of fashionable Washington, around Dupont Circle, and on through historic Georgetown, transferring to Cabin John cars at 35th Street and Prospect Avenue.

In passing the northwest corner of 28th and P Streets, Georgetown, will be noticed what appear to be three iron-railing fences, surrounding the houses on that corner. As a matter of fact they are not iron railings at all, but consist of old gun barrels that were in use during the war of 1812, when the British invaded Washington and burned the Capitol and White House. They deserve a better fate than to be used for such purpose.

BY WASHINGTON

OCT 28 1913

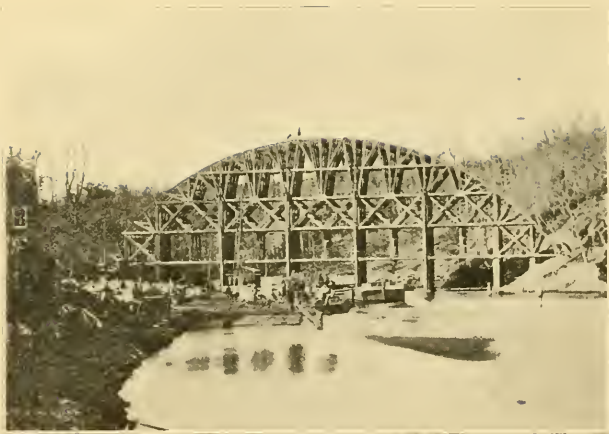


"UNION ARCH" TABLET ON EAST ABUTMENT.

The ride along the picturesque banks of the Potomac river is full of interest and delight—the wooded hills and precipitous bluffs of Virginia on the opposite side, the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal with its slow-traveling mules, the Three Sisters, The Palisades of the Potomac, High Island, Chain Bridge, Little Falls, Glen Echo, etc., are passed—all forming a panorama of ever-changing scenery, new beauties appearing to the eye at every turn, until the “loop” is reached, when one descends from the car to enjoy still further the immense span of masonry which the skill of man has thrown across the mighty chasm in the hills, whilst all around and below is Nature’s handiwork, a combination that appeals to every one who appreciates genius in man and the beautiful in Nature.

Years have rolled by since its erection, but it is as solid and immovable as the everlasting hills surrounding it, and as so aptly inscribed on its abutment, “*Esto Perpetua*”—it will last forever as a monument to the genius and inspiration of its engineer, Montgomery C. Meigs. In the official records of the War Department it is known as the “UNION ARCH,” by reason of having been erected during the Civil War, and it is so inscribed upon the tablet on the east abutment, but it is best known as “CABIN JOHN BRIDGE,” taking its name from the creek or run which it spans.

The origin of the title “Cabin John,” as applied to this creek, is somewhat traditionary. History, it seems, has not recorded the exact date at which the remarkable character of this name made his first appearance and settled down in this vicinity, but old residents are of the opinion (having heard it from their ancestors) that it was about the year 1790 when he took up his abode along the run that has ever since borne his name. No one ever seems to have known from whence he came, or where he went, after several years’ sojourn in this romantic spot. He was known only as “John” or “John

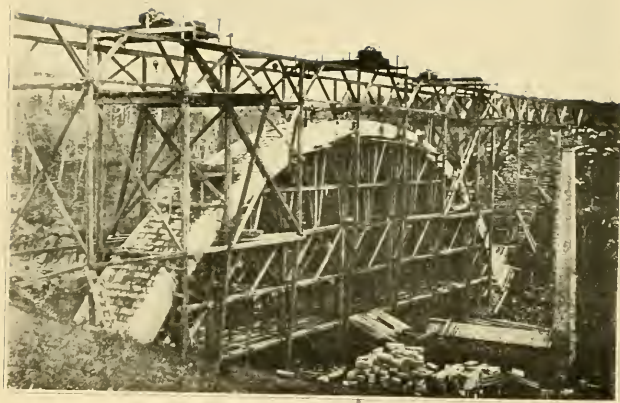


APPEARANCE DURING THE WINTER OF 1857-1858.

of the Cabin," and also as "Captain John." Upon some of the old records of Montgomery County Maryland (in which this place is located and not in the District of Columbia, as supposed by many) the name of the creek is given as "Captain John."

The present name, "Cabin John," is either a corruption of "Captain John" or was derived from "John of the Cabin." This nomadic creature led the life of a hermit, fishing in the streams and hunting in the neighboring forests. He troubled no one, and his only companions were said to be several large and ferocious hounds. He disappeared as mysteriously as he came, and nothing was ever known as to his fate. His old cabin crumbled into ruins, and during the days of slavery the old negroes in the vicinity claimed that his ghost was often seen by them near his lonely and deserted cabin.

There are others who claim that this mysterious character was an "Injun." In a recent drive over the River Road, which is a short distance northeast of the bridge, the writer chanced to come across an "old resider," Captain Pyles, who, although in his 90th year, is still hale, hearty, and vigorous. This interesting individual (as well as his father before him) has lived in this vicinity for many, many years, and his version of the story (having heard it from his father's lips) is that in the year 1790 an Indian made his appearance and erected his cabin by the creek that afterwards bore his name. He was known only by the name of "John," and afterwards by the name of "John of the Cabin." In all other particulars his story harmonizes with the generally accepted tradition as to his mode of living, etc. In further substantiation of his being an Indian he stated that he had frequently in his boyhood days found arrow, spear, and axe heads in and roundabout the old cabin. As Captain



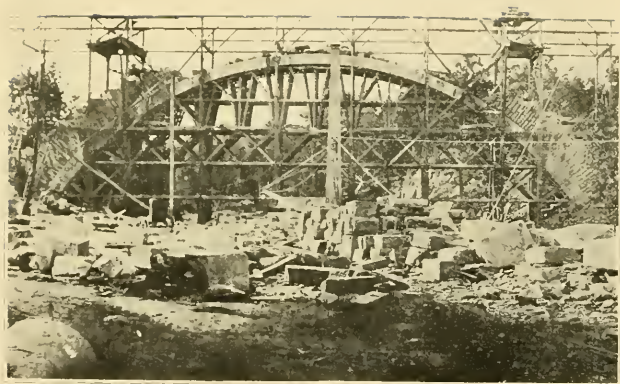
DECEMBER 6TH, 1858, TWO DAYS AFTER ARCH WAS KEED.

Pyles knows every inch of ground in this section, when he makes a statement he does so in a way to impress upon one that he knows what he is talking about, and is thoroughly familiar with his subject.

Cabin John Run takes its rise in a spring near the Fair grounds at Rockville, and flows some eight miles in a southeasterly direction, emptying into the Potomac a short distance below the bridge. Aside from the interest centered in it by reason of the traditions connected with "Cabin John," along its banks and in the vicinity there exist deposits of white-veined or gold-bearing quartz, from which gold in paying quantities has been found. x

It will probably be a matter of surprise to many to learn that gold has been found so close to the National Capital, but such is the case. Upon the Huddleston farm, which is on the east fork of the run, some valuable and beautiful specimens of free gold have been found. About the most valuable deposits have been obtained on what is known as the Harrison farm, which is some distance above the bridge and near Great Falls. Ore taken from there assayed from \$10 to \$30 to the ton, and in some cases very much higher.

In an able paper, "Gold Deposits of Montgomery County," read before the American Institute of Mining Engineers in 1890 by Mr. S. F. Emmons, of the United States Geological Survey, it was stated that up to that date something over \$12,000 worth of bullion had been taken from the Harrison farm mines. On this property can still be seen the remains of the stamping mills, furnaces, etc. It is supposed that the crude methods then employed prevented the successful workings of the ore on a paying basis. Even at the present day some old settlers occasionally bring to the Survey nuggets of gold that they have obtained from the ores on their properties. Reports say that when the California



SHOWING CONDITION OF WORK JULY 1ST, 1870.

volunteers were encamped in this vicinity during the war that they found gold in sufficient quantities to warrant their statement that they would return after the war was over and develop it, but it is supposed that they did not survive, as it was never carried out.

The famous Conduit Road, heretofore mentioned, the most beautiful drive out of Washington, is largely macadamized with this white-veined quartz, and which, it is said, will assay as high as \$16 to the ton. Specimens of this rock are found along the roadside and on any of the farms skirting the road.

CABIN JOHN BRIDGE was built by the United States Government as a part of the great aqueduct for conveying the water supply from Great Falls to Washington, a distance of some 14 or 15 miles. The initiatory steps were taken in April, 1852, when Congress made an appropriation of \$5,000 for surveys, estimates, etc. The actual work of building the aqueduct was commenced in 1853, when Jefferson Davis was Secretary of War under President Pierce, and work upon the bridge proper began in 1857.

In an able paper by Mr. W. T. S. Curtis, of Washington, read before the Columbia Historical Society in 1897, many interesting facts and statements were given. As his father, Mr. Charles T. Curtis, was the superintendent of construction of the bridge under General Meigs, the information contained therein was heard from his father's own lips, and also obtained from his private papers, as well as from the official records of the War Department, the statements can be accepted as authoritative. We can not do better than give extracts from the paper in question :

"General (then Captain) Montgomery C. Meigs assumed charge of the building of the aqueduct at its inception, after Congress made an appropriation of \$5,000 for surveys, etc. He was in charge



SECTION OF AQUEDUCT A SHORT DISTANCE ABOVE CABIN JOHN BRIDGE.

until July, 1860, when he was ordered to Fort Jefferson, Tortugas, for six months. During his absence Capt. Henry W. Benham was in charge for a short while, he in turn being succeeded by Lieut. James St. C. Morton, who was afterwards killed during the siege of Petersburg, Va., in 1864. February 22, 1861, just before the breaking out of the Civil War, Captain Meigs returned and again assumed charge of the work on the bridge and aqueduct, and the same were practically completed by him as Chief Engineer. From about May, 1861, until July, 1862, active work upon the bridge ceased, owing to the Civil War then raging. In May, 1861, Captain Meigs became Quartermaster General, and when the work was resumed in the summer of 1862, under orders of the Secretary of the Interior, General Meigs ceased to have any further charge of the work (supervision of the water works having been transferred to the Department of the Interior on account of the immense amount of work devolving upon the War Department by reason of the Civil War), and Mr. William R. Hutton succeeded him as Chief Engineer, who held the position until July, 1863, when he was succeeded by Mr. Silas Seymour. In 1867 it was again transferred to the War Department.

“In the construction of the aqueduct many difficulties arose, valleys had to be arched, and hills tunnelled and leveled to provide for the conduit. The most serious obstacle was encountered at Cabin John Run. The ravine was too wide and deep to fill, and the only solution was an aqueduct over the valley. At first it was decided to span it with a bridge of masonry supported upon a series of piers and arches, at an estimated cost of \$72,409. Subsequently this plan was changed, and it was determined that the present magnificent affair should be constructed, to excel any structure of its kind on earth, at the same time be a lasting and imperishable monument to the genius and skill of its engineer.



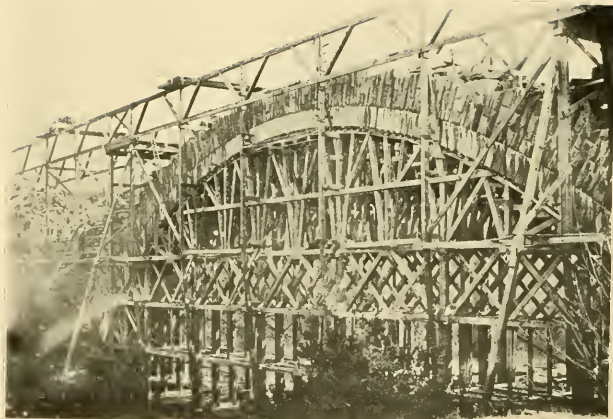
"TO-DAY THIS NOBLE STRUCTURE IS WITHOUT A RIVAL ON EARTH AS FAR AS AN ARCH OR SPAN OF MASONRY IS CONCERNED."

“To-day this noble structure is without a rival on earth as far as an arch or span of masonry is concerned. The nearest approach to it is the railroad bridge over the river Pruth in Galicia. That has a span of 213 feet, seven less than Cabin John. The Lavaur bridge in France, on the line of the Limoges and Brives railway, has a span of $201\frac{3}{4}$ feet. The largest span stone arch in Great Britain is the famous Grosvenor bridge over the river Dee at Chester, England, having a span of 200 feet.

“The total cost of the bridge was \$254,000. The cost of the conduit system was \$2,905,000. The capacity of the water main is 76,500,000 gallons daily. There were 11,914.18 cubic yards of masonry, 852.66 cubic yards of concrete, and 516 cubic yards of brick used in its construction. The cut stone arch is of Quincy (Mass.) granite, shipped to Georgetown by vessels and thence to the bridge by way of the canal. In order to provide for the transportation of this stone and other material a dam was built across the creek a short distance above the canal, and a lock was constructed at that point to permit boats to be floated into the pond. Remains of the dam can be seen to-day. The rubble arch and spandrels are of Seneca sandstone, and the abutments are of gneiss from Montgomery County. The parapet walls (which were not put on until 1872) are of red Seneca sandstone taken from the quarries some 20 miles up the Potomac River. The dimensions of the bridge are as follows:

Length, including abutments, - -	450 feet	Rise of span, - - - - -	57 feet
Height above bottom of Run, - -	105 “	Width of span, - - - - -	20 “
Length of span, - - - - -	220 “	Diameter of conduit, - - - - -	9 “

“The first actual work upon the bridge proper began early in 1857, and consisted of clearing away the underbrush, etc. The soil was removed until rock foundation was reached. As the super-



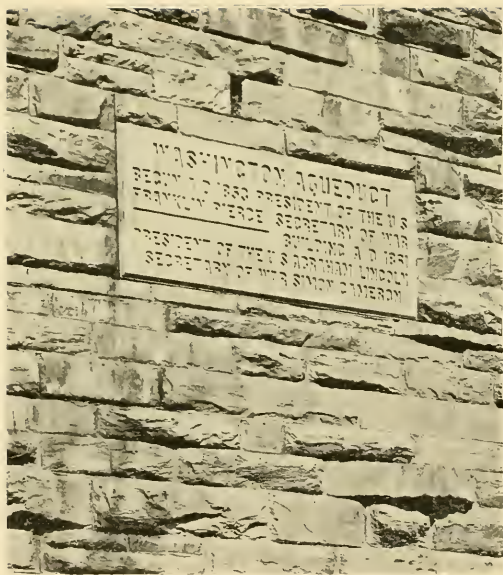
PHOTOGRAPH TAKEN FEBRUARY 27TH, 1861.

structure was to be massive, it required a correspondingly heavy center or trestle to support it during construction. This trestle rested upon a series of stone piers, which still remain, and which supported a rustic bridge until recently, when it was swept away by a flood. On December 4, 1858, the arch was keyed, and by July, 1859, the arch stones, as well as a considerable portion of the abutments, were in position.

“Although General Meigs was the Chief Engineer, it appears from the records of the War Department that the working plans and drawings of the bridge, as well as much of the detail work, up to the spring of 1861, were prepared and performed mainly by Mr. Alfred L. Rives, the Assistant Engineer. At the breaking out of the Civil War he resigned his position and joined the Confederacy. This act greatly grieved General Meigs, and it was for this reason that Rives’ name never was placed upon any of the stones or tablets. He is the father of Amelia Rives, the celebrated authoress,

“After the resignation of Mr. Rives in 1861 he was succeeded by Mr. William R. Hutton, and in 1862, when work was resumed under the direction of the Department of the Interior, Mr. Hutton became the chief engineer. The famous Washington bridge over the Harlem river, New York, is one of his productions.”

“At the time work was commenced upon the aqueduct, Jefferson Davis was Secretary of War under President Pierce, and his name so appeared upon the tablet on the west abutment. In 1862 his name was erased. Much has been said and written during recent years regarding this erasure. Secretaries Cameron and Stanton (War Secretaries under President Lincoln) have been frequently charged with having had this done, and General Meigs was likewise accused. In 1892, at the time



TABLET ON WEST ABUTMENT, SHOWING WHERE JEFFERSON DAVIS' NAME
WAS ERASED.

of the death of General Meigs, several articles were published charging him with being the author of this erasure. As a matter of fact, at the time this erasure was made, the bridge was under control of the Interior (not the War) Department, and was done by orders of Caleb B. Smith, the then Secretary of the Interior."

On September 8, 1892, Mr. Wm. R. Hutton, formerly one of the Engineers, wrote the *Washington Star*, as follows:

"In June, 1862, at the request of the Secretary of the Interior, Mr. Caleb B. Smith, to whose department the aqueduct had just been transferred, I accompanied the Secretary and a number of members of Congress on a tour of inspection of the aqueduct by way of the canal. Opposite Cabin John several of the party disembarked and walked to the bridge for a nearer view. Returning in hot haste, 'Do you know,' said Mr. Galusha Grow to the Secretary, 'that rebel Meigs has put Jeff Davis' name on the bridge?' Turning to me the Secretary said: 'The first order I give you is to cut Jeff Davis' name off the bridge.' A few days later I was appointed Chief Engineer of the aqueduct. Not taking seriously the Secretary's remarks, I did nothing in the matter. A week later Mr. Robert McIntyre, the contractor, arrived to resume his work upon the bridge, and called to pay his respects to the Secretary. The Secretary said to him that they had put Jeff Davis' name on the bridge, and he wished they would cut it off. 'With the greatest pleasure, Mr. Secretary,' was the reply, and the contractor's first work was to remove Mr. Davis' name."

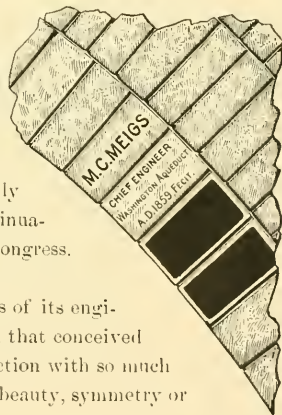


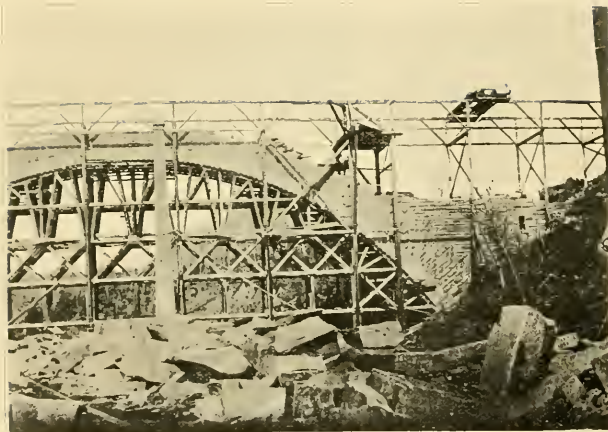
M. C. MEIGS,
CHIEF ENGINEER,
WASHINGTON AQUEDUCT,
A. D. 1859.
FECIT.

“ General Meigs being apprehensive lest some action might be taken looking to his removal as engineer in charge of the aqueduct, and desiring to perpetuate his name as Chief Engineer of the bridge, caused the inscription shown herewith to be cut in deep, imperishable letters upon two of the arch or ring stones near the east abutment :

“ During his absence from July, 1860, to February, 1861, Captain Benham and Lieutenant Morton, who were in charge for this short period, had their names also cut on the face of two of the arch stones, immediately under those of General Meigs, and designated themselves as Chief Engineers. Upon his return, observing what had been done, he gave orders that their names should be erased, contending that it was improper to have their names appear as Chief Engineers, especially as the work performed by them during his absence was simply a continuation of his projects and plans which had received the approval of Congress. (The black stones show where names were erased.)

“ The bridge will last forever, a monument to the skill and genius of its engineer, nor will time obscure or belittle the glory achieved by the mind that conceived its graceful lines, or the credit due to those who directed its construction with so much precision and detail that not a stone has moved or settled to mar its beauty, symmetry or strength.”

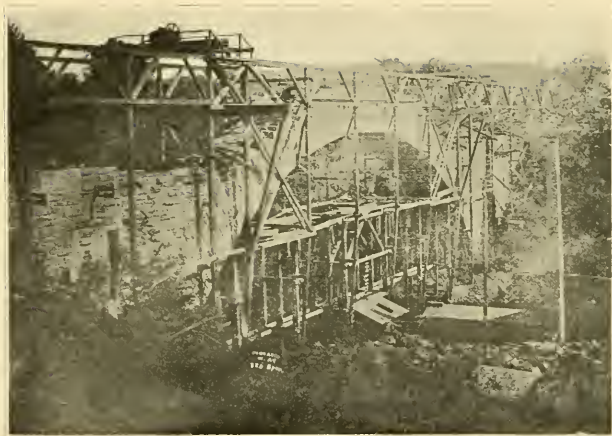




CONDITION DURING SPRING OF 1891.



AUGUST 12TH, 1861. SHORTLY AFTER REMOVAL OF CENTRE.



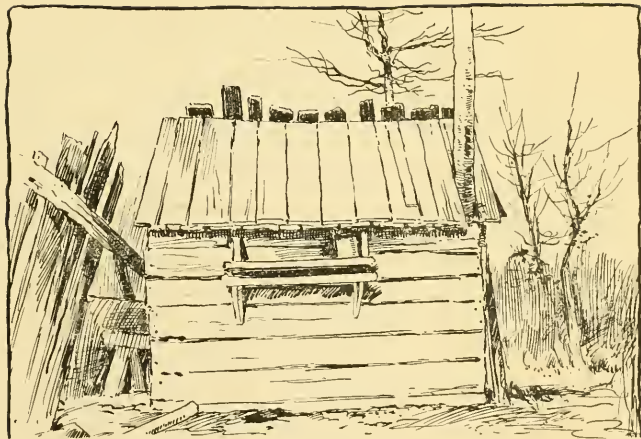
SHORTLY AFTER THE TABLET WAS PLACED IN POSITION ON WEST ABUTMENT.



PHOTOGRAPH TAKEN DECEMBER 5, 1893, THE DAY WHEN WATER WAS FIRST TURNED ON IN THE AQUEDUCT.



WAGON TRAIN ON THE BRIDGE, WINTER OF 1864.



THE negative of this picture, with a lot of old Civil War negatives, was found in an old stable off Pennsylvania Avenue, Washington, D. C., where they had been stored by a traveling photographer many years ago.

The package was labeled "Prof. Smith." In searching for information about photographers in this section from twenty-five to thirty-five years ago we learn that one Prof. Smith traveled along the canal from lock to lock, making pictures, and it is supposed the negative marked "John, of the Cabin," was made by him near Cabin John Bridge.

HOW TO REACH CABIN JOHN



ON THE TOWPATH OF CANAL

The best way to reach Cabin John Bridge is to board Georgetown car on F street (Metropolitan Line.) Cars with the following sign :

GEORGETOWN ONLY

take you to corner Prospect avenue and 35th street, where you get free transfer to Cabin John car, and which takes you to the District line for one fare or ticket, from which point an extra 5 cents is charged. At intervals cars run through to Cabin John without change.

The ride along the picturesque banks of the Potomac river is full of interest and delight—the wooded hills and precipitous bluffs of Virginia on the opposite side, the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal

with its slow-traveling mules, the Three Sisters, The Palisades of the Potomac, High Island, Chain Bridge, Little Falls, Glen Echo, etc., are passed—all forming a panorama of ever-changing scenery—new beauties appearing to the eye at every turn, until the “loop” is reached, when one descends from the car to enjoy still further the immense span of masonry which the skill of man has thrown across the mighty chasm in the hills, whilst all around is Nature’s handiwork.

Aside from the interest in the bridge and its surroundings, it can be stated quite positively that nowhere in this country can be found a more beautiful and attractive trolley ride than that along the banks of the Potomac river.

Whatever you miss seeing in Washington, do not fail to go to Cabin John Bridge.



A GLIMPSE OF THE POTOMAC.

